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DEPARTMENT FOR PA/PR/FPCW (JBAILEY), NEA/PPD (DBENZE), NEA/ARP
(BJACKSON)

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SUBJECT: KUWAIT PROPOSALS FOR FPC REPORTING TOURS 2007

¶1. Kuwait Public Affairs proposes five rank ordered FPC reporting tour topics: Gulf regional security; free trade; Islam/Religion in America; history of women's participation in American politics; and the life of Kuwaiti students at American colleges and universities. Post also nominates Al-Qabas newspaper to participate in one or more of these subject tours.

¶2. Gulf regional security: This tour could provide access to high-level officials at the U.S. Department of State, the White House, Congress, and the Pentagon. With this access, journalists could report on U.S. interest in ensuring Gulf security, the emphasis on cooperation with regional partners and the role that NATO and other international organizations could play to strengthen regional security.

¶3. Free trade: This tour could provide access to senior government officials at the Departments of State and Commerce as well as with the Small Business Administration and other trade related USG entities. Private businesses with a potential to invest in Kuwait could also be included. The tour would focus on the Kuwait-U.S. TIFA agreement underscoring the benefit to Kuwait and the region of an eventual FTA and encouragement of entrepreneurship, particularly for women business leaders.

¶4. Islam in America: This tour could provide access to the American Islamic community, including Imams and political leaders. Journalists would have the opportunity to report on the freedom that Muslims enjoy in the U.S. to practice their religion. At the same time, the tour could explore the ongoing debate in the U.S., and elsewhere, about the role of religion in public life. The experience of how American society balances the separation of church and state would be useful to Muslim nations, including Kuwait, that are undergoing similar debates within their own societies.

¶5. Women's participation in American politics: This tour could provide access to historians and historic places that can bring to life the struggle for women's equality in America. Current issues of women in American politics could be explored with women political leaders and grassroots organizers of today. An interview with Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi -- who recently visited Kuwait -- would be a great capstone interview for this tour. Subsequent reporting would give Kuwaitis a framework for understanding the goals of the women's movement to attain equal participation in political life and share in the American economy. It could also lay a foundation for appreciating the benefit of gender equity to all society.

¶6. Middle Eastern students at American colleges and universities: Many Kuwaiti parents and students remain hesitant to travel to the U.S. to pursue higher academic studies for fear that Arabs and Muslims are not welcome in America. This program could provide access to Arab and Muslim students, particularly student leaders, currently living and studying in the U.S. This tour could bring journalists face-to-face with Kuwaitis and other Middle Eastern

students and scholars studying in American institutions to discuss their experiences interacting with American society, the benefits of a U.S. education, and also the role that they play as representatives of their own nations, informing Americans about the Middle East and Islam.

¶7. Post nominates Al-Qabas Arabic-language newspaper. With a circulation of about 65,000, Al-Qabas enjoys a wide circulation in Kuwait and its reporting is generally pro-American. Over the years Public Affairs has worked closely with editors and reporters of Al-Qabas on numerous USG VIP interviews, NAVCENT media reporting tours, and a US/NATO Media Reporting Tour to Brussels. Public Affairs Kuwait has reached an informal agreement with Al-Qabas editorial management to co-organize several reporting tours to the U.S., if approved.

¶8. Expected results: Previous reports in Al-Qabas on media reporting programs such as the US-NATO Tour, and NAVCENT-sponsored Coalition Embarkations in the Arabian Gulf, which were co-organized for the newspaper by the Public Affairs Kuwait, consisted of multiple reports published on consecutive days in full-page colorful layouts. These reports reflected U.S. Foreign policy accurately with appropriately selected images and headlines.

¶5. Cost Sharing Option: Al-Qabas editorial management has agreed in principle to share the cost of the program with the U.S. Embassy by covering the international airfare for round-trip air travel between Kuwait and the U.S. for all Al Qabas participants in the program.

¶6. PLEASE ADVISE ACCEPTANCE.

TUELLER